Project A-619
Technical Report No. 3

AUDIT AND EVALUATION OF RETAIL AND WHOLESALE TRADE ACTIVITIES IN CARROLLTON AND CARROLL COUNTY, GEORGIA

by

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December 1962

Prepared under the auspices of the Area Redevelopment Administration
U. S. Department of Commerce
Washington 25, D. C.

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Foreword

The third technical report in the series being prepared as part of a projected three-year research and technical assistance program, this evaluation of retail and wholesale trade activities is designed to point up opportunities for expanding this part of Carroll County's economy.

This report, like those on industrial sites and park and recreation facilities previously completed, is designed to serve as a basis for action programs which it is hoped will be carried out by appropriate local groups and individuals.

Later phases of this part of the project will concentrate on providing technical assistance to individual merchants and stores desirous of working to implement the report's recommendations. The subject of physical improvement of the central business district will also be given concentrated attention in the months immediately ahead.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on a careful evaluation of the trade potential and atmosphere in Carrollton and Carroll County:

1. As in many other small communities, the lack of available parking facilities in downtown Carrollton is an obvious deterrent to retail growth. On Monday, Friday and Saturday -- the chief shopping days -- parking facilities are seriously taxed. Within the confines of the city square, a total of 80 parking places are available; 25 establishments face on the square. It is easy to charge off all retailing problems to a lack of parking space; while additional space is required, this is far from the main problem. Additional parking facilities will be necessary, however, if the central business district is to be developed properly.

2. It is quite likely that there is simply an overcrowding of stores in some retail categories. There are six jewelry stores, for example, and the volume of trade in Carrollton makes some of these marginal. Some merchants have expressed a feeling that the smaller outlets drain off business from other stores without themselves really prospering.

3. A major point can be made purely on the basis of the obvious merchandising leaders. Several stores on the west side of the square formed a cooperative association and bought a parking lot. These stores have generally shown a very good increase in sales volume. Not all of this increase can be attributed simply to the fact that they have parking space; the increase is really a result of an attitude which is reflected in excellent merchandising practices. Most of the stores on the square have reportedly been slow to join in cooperative ventures. They have tended to go it alone, and some have suffered from it. At the risk of oversimplifying, there are several stores in and around the square which would obviously dominate simply because they know how to sell. There are a number of stores on the square which, in almost any situation, would be marginal. A striking example of the former is the Diana Shop, a relatively new store. The salespeople are well trained, the store is very attractive, and the merchandise is effectively displayed. While the store has a good location, there is actually little difference in its merchandise and that carried by some less successful stores. Yet the Diana Shop

is becoming one of the dominant stores purely because of the most basic kind of good merchandising practices.

4. The aggressive stores have generally shown a good sales increase, but there also appears to be a factor related to price lines, credit, etc. Those stores which sell cut-rate, cheaper items for cash or tight credit appear to have suffered in part because their lower-income clientele does not have the available employment that would support more trade. The stores which carry name brands, good to better items and variety, etc., make their appeal to the middle and upper income groups. Most such stores have done very well in the last few years.

5. A definite need exists for stimulating greater cooperation among the local merchants. Some time ago, joint sales efforts reportedly were very successful. In more recent years, there has been some disagreement among members of the Merchants' Association and a resulting lack of cooperation on any proposal for special projects -- advertising campaigns, parking lots, etc.

6. One of the most successful and thoughtful merchants in Carrollton has suggested a fundamental cause of a part of the local retail difficulties. He suggests that many small shop owners are simply apathetic -- some retailers are reluctant to take energetic and aggressive action in stimulating more trade. For example, families have little opportunity to shop together in Carrollton since there are no night openings. In a large store, the cost of a night opening can be hazardous because of the personnel costs involved. In the small stores typical of Carrollton, the cost is little more than the electric bill. Once a week night openings should certainly be tried, but many storekeepers refuse to participate. Unless most do, customers will not respond in sufficient numbers to justify the venture.

7. The central business district is generally unattractive to the stranger in town. Local residents frequently agree, but some have apparently become accustomed to the appearance of the area. A generally overlooked but important consideration is the reaction of new residents and those non-local customers whose patronage must be gained if the trade outlets are to grow in sales volume.

8. The interior and display areas of some stores could be noticeably improved by the most obvious means of better lighting, repainting and more

frequent cleaning of shelves and counters. As discussed in 7 above, a long-time customer of such a store tends to overlook these things. They are important, however, in attracting new customers.

9. There is a general air of friendliness and courtesy in most of the retail stores. Salespeople are attentive and helpful. However, it would be desirable to make them aware of some aspects of customer service which are sensitive areas, especially among Negro citizens. The patronage of a customer, whatever his race, is dependent in large part upon the courtesies extended him. Normal formalities are sufficient; patronizing attitudes are unsuitable, especially if combined with terms of address that are distasteful to the Negro customer.

10. Finally, there is an impression of some local opposition to the development of neighborhood shopping centers and to the presence of new chain stores. Actually, it would be desirable to solicit new chain outlets -- their aggressive merchandising techniques bring in new customers whose patronage can be shared by other stores. In addition, the merchandising methods of such stores generally stimulate improved methods in the existing outlets.

Recommendations

The future growth of both retail and wholesale trade in Carrollton depends upon its development as a major shopping center for nearby west Georgia and east Alabama counties. Essential to this development is the recognition that the trade outlets must adopt those measures necessary to attract new customers who will be weighing the attractions of Carrollton stores against the attractions of other communities.

The following actions are recommended as steps which will contribute to the development of Carrollton as a thriving trade center:

1. The Merchants' Association should be revitalized and supported by local merchants. At present, its support comes from only a part of the retail community. There must be an organization to coordinate a unified, aggressive approach to trade stimulation.

2. A general cleanup of the business district would result in an improved attitude of local customers and much more interest on the part of non-resident shoppers. This applies to both the exterior and interior of stores.

A number of stores are narrow and long; improved lighting and interior displays, including refurbishing of fixtures, would be desirable.

3. The community should take immediate steps to enlarge available parking facilities. Obviously, all parking spaces will not be filled at all times. Their convenient availability, however, will spur the interest of shoppers both within and outside the community.

4. Local officials should give early consideration to the need for a thorough study of the central business district with a view towards planning requirements for the future. This is a fundamental need if the business community is to expand along the most attractive and efficient lines.

5. The local merchants, preferably through the Merchants' Association, should plan a cooperative advertising effort which would extend throughout the trading area. Special sale days (participated in by all merchants) have general appeal, and consumers are easily conditioned to expect periodic sales and promotional events.

6. Basic to any expansion of trade activity is the recognition by some local retailers that they cannot realistically ignore or actively oppose the introduction of modern merchandising methods. This is not to suggest that each store must adopt a merchandising program too sophisticated for its needs; it does suggest that each retailer might profitably review his merchandising practices in the light of current and anticipated competition.

7. A number of consumers commented on specific needs in the community. Additional restaurant facilities and improved household repair services appear to be of particular importance. Local businessmen should explore further the actual potential of such proposals.

8. It is impossible to compete with Atlanta stores in terms of variety of merchandise. On all other terms, Carrollton can compete on an equal footing. Local retailers have an unusual opportunity to create a model trade center simply by recognizing and working for the sales potential of the trading area. There are outlets in Carrollton which compare favorably with better shops in any city; there are other stores which are absolute deterrents to the attraction of new customers to the shopping district. In retailing, there is no magic touchstone for success. Whatever it is in any one case, it is usually discovered when a merchant looks critically at his own operation from the

viewpoint of a customer. In Carrollton, the merchandising practices and aggressiveness of local retailers will determine whether potential customers are gained or lost to competing trade centers.

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This study of retail and wholesale trade in Carroll County is one phase of the broad project authorized by the Area Redevelopment Administration. It is appropriate that this segment of the county's economy was singled out for study since it influences, and is influenced by, other aspects of the economy. Volume of trade is one of the key barometers of a community's prosperity, and factors affecting trade have significant economic implications.

The influence of Atlanta as a wholesaling center has substantially overshadowed wholesale activity in Carroll County. There is every reason to conclude that the growth of the Atlanta trade complex will result in even greater domination of this aspect of trade activity. For these reasons, this report is concerned primarily with an analysis of retail trade activities. Because it is the dominant trading center in the county, Carrollton was chosen as the focal point of the study. The results of the analysis, however, have application for other communities in the area.

Approach

The observations, conclusions and recommendations included in this report are based on information secured from published sources, discussions with local business and civic leaders, and interviews with both merchants and consumers. The approach to the study followed closely the guidelines established at the outset of the project:

1. Published data on trade were accumulated and evaluated. Particular attention was given to the period 1957-1961 and to the trends that developed during this period.

2. Meetings were held with retailers on both a group and an individual basis to explain the purpose of the program and to encourage cooperation. Excellent support was received from local newspaper officials and civic groups interested in the project.

3. Merchants representative of each major retail category were interviewed to secure background information and opinion on local merchandising practices. The type of information sought is illustrated in Exhibit A at the end of this report.

4. A consumer survey was conducted to identify the buying habits of local residents and to establish some pattern of their likes and dislikes of local merchandising practices. The consumer survey form is reproduced as Exhibit B at the end of this report. It would have been very difficult to have completed the consumer survey without the assistance of local volunteer workers. The Pilot Club, the Business and Professional Women's Club, and several members of the Carver High School faculty gave assistance. Grateful acknowledgment is particularly due Miss Margaret Samples and Mr. W. M. Mollete for their work in coordinating the efforts of volunteer workers.

Background

Four basic considerations were fundamental to this study: (1) recent trends in the volume and character of sales; (2) the purchasing habits and attitudes of local consumers; (3) the merchandising practices and policies of local merchants; and (4) the trade potential within the area based on the availability of "buying power."

One of the subtle but distinguishing characteristics of retailing is the usual requirement that the customer must come to the store to buy. The retailer must first attract the customer to his store and then persuade him to buy. Of obvious importance is the requirement that the customer must have buying power to support his needs and desires.

The most effective defense for a small town merchant against the lure of competing trade centers is the creation of a customer following based on something other than his convenient location or his personal friendship with customers. While local retailers do have such basic assets, these advantages often lead a merchant to conclude that other factors, such as the quality of customer service or the attractiveness of the store, are not particularly important. While they may not be important to the inner circle of long-time customers, they are important in building new trade. An awareness of these principles has been demonstrated by several successful stores in Carrollton; the concept could be profitably applied by some of the other outlets.

Finally, small town retailing tends to be more of an art than a science. While most of the sophisticated principles of industrial management are recognized, if not applied, in small manufacturing operations, the specialized management methods of large retailers have not spread as widely to small retailers. In the first place, many retailers are satisfied with things the way they are. Secondly, many find it difficult to justify the cost of some of the ideas used successfully by larger firms. Finally, the typical independent retailer tends to be basically a trader, with a good part of his success dependent upon his instinct for both the purchasing power and preferences of his customers.

In the Carrollton environment -- with forceful competition from Atlanta, Newnan, LaGrange, and other nearby towns -- the future growth of retail trade activity will depend upon an intelligent and aggressive approach to capturing the potential sales volume in the trading area. The recommendations stated in this report are intended to suggest steps toward this goal.

RECENT TRENDS IN TRADE ACTIVITY

Carrollton was for many years a relatively isolated trade center for farmers. Now, easy access to trade outlets in Atlanta and other nearby towns strongly influences both wholesaling and retailing in Carroll County. Atlanta retailers have the capacity to offer customers major price, variety, credit and service concessions. However, it is a mistake to assume that the reaction of Carroll County consumers is shaped entirely by the merchandising tactics of Atlanta stores; it is also affected by the practices of community merchants.

Retail Sales Trends

The trends in retail sales during the years 1957-1961 are revealing. Table 1 indicates the trends in total retail sales, per household retail sales and retail sales by type of establishment for Carrollton, Carroll County and Georgia. Total retail sales rose very slightly for Carrollton during this period, somewhat faster for the county, and significantly faster for the state. Per household retail sales in all areas were slightly off at the end of the period. For the county and for Carrollton, the peak year for per household retail sales came in 1958, after which a gradual decline began. The peak year for Georgia followed in 1959. In Carrollton, sales increases were marked in food, general merchandise, apparel, gas station and drug outlets. Small increases occurred in eating and drinking establishments and in furniture and appliance outlets. Actual decreases occurred in automotive and in lumber, building material and hardware sales.

This trend in sales is reflected in the changes in the number of retail outlets operating in Carrollton during this period. (See Table 2.)

The total of 203 outlets in 1957 declined to 185 in 1961. It is probable that the decrease in the number of food, apparel, and eating and drinking outlets during this period reflects the closing of a number of marginal stores. Significant decreases were also shown in the number of automotive outlets and lumber, building material and hardware stores, while the number of general merchandise, gas station and drug outlets increased.

In comparison with towns of roughly comparable size and location, Carrollton's per establishment retail sales in 1961 showed unusual strength in

Table 1

RETAIL SALES TRENDS, 1957-1961
(Thousands of Dollars)

Area and Year	Total Retail Sales	Per Household Sales	Food	Eating and Drinking	General Merchan-dise	Apparel	Furniture, Appliance	Automotive	Gas Stations	Lumber Building Hardware	Drugs
Carrollton:											
1957	17,011	-	3,364	484	1,107	1,413	1,145	5,258	1,116	1,622	515
1958	17,523	-	3,696	508	1,183	1,535	1,179	4,825	1,237	1,664	561
1959	17,359	-	3.736	452	1,425	1,723	1,192	3,949	1,508	1,409	644
1960	17,767	-	3,942	467	1,468	1,761	1,165	4,001	1,592	1,339	684
1961	18,098	-	4,167	493	1,586	1,817	1,177	3,868	1,658	1,367	719
Carroll County:											
1957	25,055	2,948	5,251	605	3,228	1,712	1,508	6,828	1,874	1,982	748
1958	25,972	3,092	5,768	636	3,450	1,858	1,552	6,265	2,077	2,033	815
1959	29,393	3,062	6,617	743	3,293	2,253	2,124	6,499	2,380	2,372	1,230
1960	29,649	3,088	6,868	757	3,319	2,282	2,041	6,488	2,478	2,320	1,282
1961	29,842	2,897	7,147	788	3,513	2,335	2,030	6,184	2,547	2,236	1,325
Georgia:											
1957	3,567,800	3,582	831,483	161,425	522,925	192,116	177,797	758,717	314,732	219,568	118,681
1958	3,628,353	3,596	886,163	164,213	542,573	201,546	176,917	673,359	337,788	218,482	125,327
1959	3,848,459	3,757	849,258	174,205	612,055	277,490	185,546	719,006	312,568	283,848	125,432
1960	3,924,204	3,686	891,825	179,695	628,365	231,483	180,646	724,119	328,125	279,927	132,618
1961	3,892,114	3,543	915,107	182,419	649,765	230,069	177,238	676,279	333,209	267,348	135,168

Source: "Survey of Buying Power," Sales Management.

Table 2

NUMBER OF RETAIL OUTLETS BY TYPE IN CARROLLTON
(1957-1961)

Type of Outlet	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
All retail outlets	203	203	185	185	185
Food	50	50	31	31	31
Eating and drinking	21	21	17	17	17
General merchandise	17	17	27	27	27
Apparel	15	15	12	12	12
Furniture and appliance	13	13	13	13	13
Automotive	19	19	15	15	15
Gas station	23	23	34	34	34
Lumber, building material and hardware	12	12	6	6	6
Drug	8	8	9	9	9

Source: "Survey of Buying Power," Sales Management.

Table 3

AVERAGE PER ESTABLISHMENT RETAIL SALES IN CARROLLTON AND COMPARABLE CITIES
(1961)

Type of Outlet	Carrollton	Cartersville	Newnan
All retail outlets	$ 97,827	$141,663	$119,725
Food	134,419	228,500	142,385
Eating and drinking	29,000	71,714	43,000
General merchandise	58,741	68,363	111,917
Apparel	151,416	75,687	74,889
Furniture and appliance	90,538	102,666	82,455
Automotive	257,866	408,000	308,615
Gas station	48,764	69,687	78,200
Lumber, building material and hardware	227,833	222,142	183,286
Drug	79,888	126,200	173,666

Source: "Survey of Buying Power," Sales Management.

apparel and substantial levels in furniture and appliance and lumber, building materials and hardware sales. (See Table 3.) Average per establishment sales were low in food, eating and drinking, general merchandise, automotive, gas station and drug outlets.

Wholesale Sales Trends[1/]

Reflecting Carroll County's new role in the Atlanta metropolitan complex, wholesaling activities failed to expand to any significant degree during the past decade. The rate of increase of sales between 1948 and 1954 (13%) barely exceeded the 1954-58 rate of slightly over 10%. (See Table 4.) There are no apparent reasons why this decreasing rate of increase should not continue, especially among the group designated as "Merchant Wholesalers." This group, the largest in number in 1958 with 17 firms, includes those establishments usually known as wholesalers, distributors and jobbers primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and physically storing goods made by others and selling them to the public. Sales in this group declined during the 1954-58 period by 23.8%.

Information on counties with less than 100 wholesale establishments is very limited in the Census of Business. Sales and number of establishments are given by only one type-of-operation group, Merchant Wholesalers, the remainder being lumped together under "Other Types." This latter group includes manufacturers' sales branches and sales offices, petroleum bulk plants and terminals, merchandise agents and brokers, and assemblers of farm products. This combined group enjoyed a 98% increase in sales in Carroll County during the 1954-58 period.

Since data on wholesaling activities in small counties are not very revealing in themselves, a quick look at other counties in relation to Carroll County might cast some light on trends in this industry. Coweta, Newton and Spalding counties were selected because of their proximity to Atlanta, about the same as Carroll, and because each contains a city of over 5,000 population.

1/ This section is based on an unpublished study by M. Dale Henson, Industrial Development Division, Engineering Experiment Station, Georgia Institute of Technology.

In line with Carroll County's downward trend in wholesale sales, both Coweta and Spalding counties had a decline during the 1954-58 period. Supporting the contention advanced in an earlier paragraph that Merchant Wholesalers should experience declines in sales as the Atlanta metropolitan complex expands, all three of the above-mentioned counties had sales decreases in this category. Since Merchant Wholesalers typically distribute their products by truck, the Atlanta firms are likely extending their area of operations into surrounding counties as the area grows. There is apparently still a place for specialized wholesalers, however, as the category designated as Other Types had substantial gains in all four counties.

Table 4

WHOLESALE ACTIVITY IN CARROLL AND COMPARABLE COUNTIES
(1954 and 1958)

County and Type	Wholesale Sales 1954 (000)	Wholesale Sales 1958 (000)	Wholesale Sales Change (%)	No. of Establishments 1954	No. of Establishments 1958	No. of Establishments Change
Carroll County:						
All wholesale outlets	$ 9,937	$10,937	+10.1	15	27	+12
Merchant wholesalers	7,161	5,456	-23.8	8	17	+ 9
Other types	2,776	5,481	+97.4	7	10	+ 3
Coweta County:						
All wholesale outlets	26,743	21,691	-18.9	26	25	- 1
Merchant wholesalers	24,695	19,034	-22.9	16	16	--
Other types	2,048	2,657	+29.7	10	9	- 1
Newton County:						
All wholesale outlets	4,060	8,473	+109.0	14	18	+ 4
Merchant wholesalers	1,210	3,724	+208.0	7	10	+ 3
Other types	2,850	4,749	+67.0	7	8	+ 1
Spalding County:						
All wholesale outlets	23,774	22,918	- 3.6	38	41	+ 3
Merchant wholesalers	17,404	15,246	-12.4	27	27	--
Other types	6,370	7,627	+19.7	11	14	+ 3

Source: U. S. Census of Business: 1958, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

EVALUATION OF CARROLLTON RETAILING ACTIVITIES

The Business District

The central business district in Carrollton lies around the city square and its adjacent streets. Seventy-four establishments front on the square and on intersecting streets. A total of 80 parking spaces are provided within the square itself, with off-street parking available in the rear of some stores. Several firms cooperated in opening a parking lot at the rear of the Belk-Rhodes store. The venture has apparently been an excellent attraction for customers, particularly to those stores on the west side of the square.

Figure 1 indicates the location of individual firms in the central business district. The key to identification of these businesses includes an evaluation of the exterior appearance of each store. Any qualitative evaluation is subject to debate; the individual grading of store appearance was made through the eyes of an outsider who might be considered typical of a prospective customer in the retail community.

Merchandising Practices and Policies

Perhaps the most striking single impression about the retail trade situation in Carrollton is the general lack of interest in any cooperative effort. This is particularly noticeable in the area of sales promotion. A few stores carry the burden of advertising and sales promotion, while most of the firms depend upon word-of-mouth advertising. To be sure, there is some justification for the viewpoint of small independents -- existing profit margins sometimes do not permit any appreciable allowance for advertising. However, it is precisely for this reason that cooperative sales promotion activities should appeal to the smaller stores.

In the course of this study, a sampling of experiences and comments was secured from 16 representative stores in Carrollton. The survey included furniture, jewelry, drug, variety, general merchandise, specialty, apparel, shoe and hardware outlets. While the collection of data has its appropriate role, the art of retailing is measured in large part by the imagination and vigor of the retailer. The purpose of the survey of retailers, therefore, was a dual one: to collect background information and to gain impressions on

FIGURE 1
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, CARROLLTON

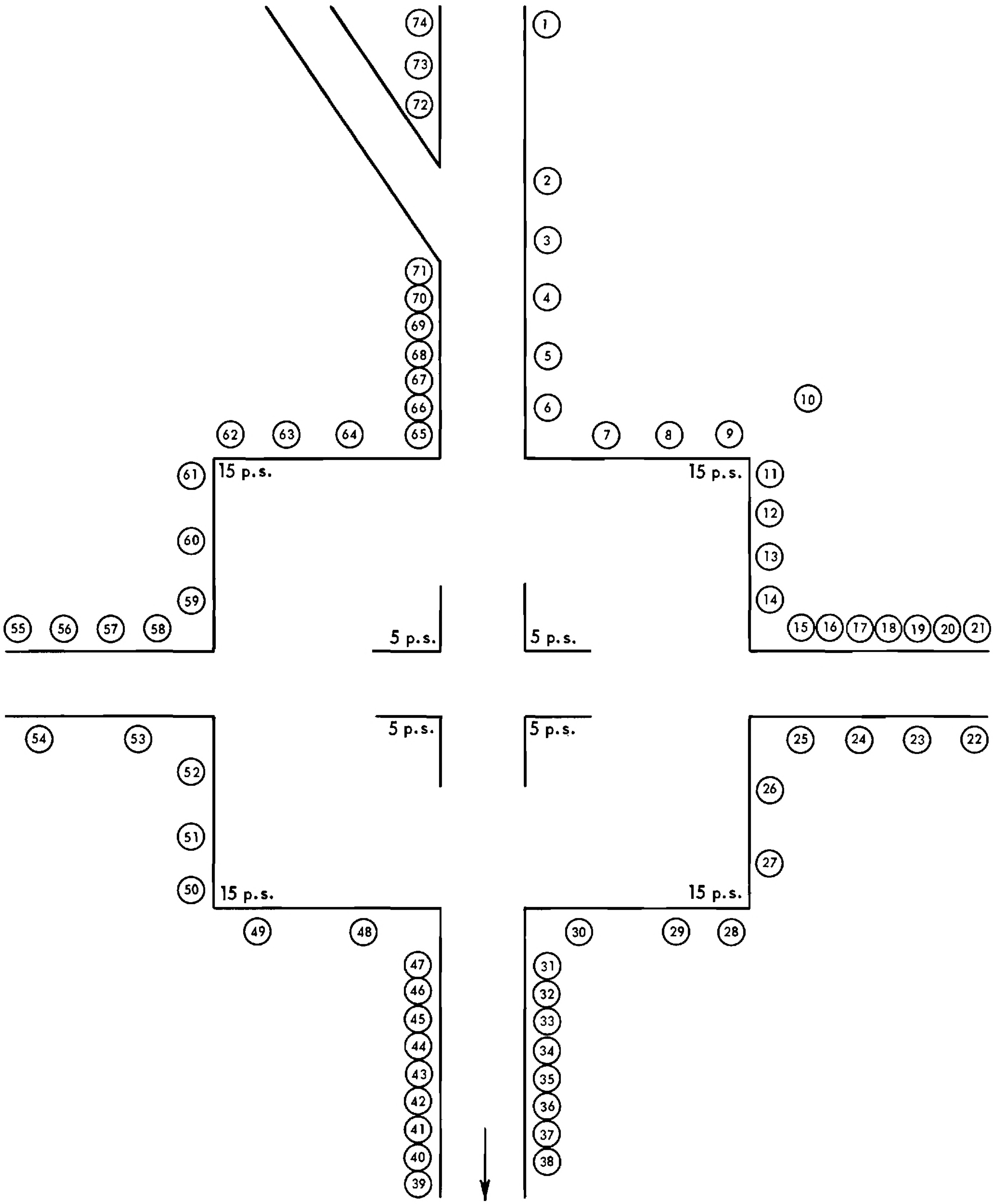

Figure 1
(Continued)

Key to Identification of Stores

G = Good outside appearance
F = Fair
B = Bad

1. Kroger - F
2. Warren Furn. and Appliance - F
3. Belk Rhodes - G
4. Empire 5 & 10 - F
5. West Ga. Ins. Co. - F
6. Loan Company - F
7. People's Bank - G
8. McConnell Cloth Shop - G
9. Payton's Restaurant - B
10. Colonial Grocery - B
11. McConnell 5 & 10 - F
12. Horton Gift Shop - G
13. Young Jewelry - F
14. Wester Shoes - F
15. Beauty Shop - F
16. Photo Shop - F
17. Household Shop - F
18. Economy Auto - G
19. Auto Parts Store - G
20. Burson Feed Store - F
21. Bargain Counter - B
22. Standard Oil Station - B
23. Jewelry Store - F
24. Mary Carter Paint Store - G
25. Cartwright Grocery - B
26. McClellan 5 & 10 - F
27. Rexall Drugs - G
28. Groover-Smith Furniture - F
29. Merrill Dress Shop - F
30. Reeves Jewelry Shop - B
31. Carroll Finance Co. - F
32. Barber Shop - F
33. Huff Optometry Shop - F
34. Loan Office - F
35. Law Office - F
36. Barber Shop - F
37. Sherwin-Williams Paint Store - G
38. Singer Sewing Machine Shop - G
39. Sears Mail Order House - G
40. Austin Music Co. - G
41. Carrollton Office Equip. Co. - G
42. Loan Office - G
43. Cole Jewelry Shop - G
44. Young's Men's Shop - G
45. Folsom Dress Shop - G
46. Barber Shop - F
47. Carroll Cafe - F
48. Turner Seed Store - B
49. Carroll Hardware - F
50. Western Auto - B
51. The Hub - F
52. Southern 5 & 10 - F
53. Robbins Clothing Store - G
54. Mather Bros. Furniture - G
55. Myrtle's Dress Shop - B
56. Carrollton Seed & Feed Store - F
57. Smith Shoe Store - F
58. Modern Beauth Shop - B
59. McGee's Bakery - B
60. Reuben's Department Store - F
61. Leader Department Store - F
62. Globe Department Store - G
63. Lamar Shop - G
64. Diana Shop - G
65. Shoe Shop - B
66. Jewelry Store - B
67. Southern Shoe Store - F
68. Copeland & Lancaster Dress Shop - G
69. Bennett's Dress Shop - G
70. Liberty Nat. Life Ins. Co. - G
71. Griffin Drug Store - G
72. Griffin Department Store - G
73. Office Supply Store - G
74. Bank - G

merchandising practices and policies. Significantly, the greatest interest in the survey came from those merchants who were obviously among the most successful.

The general merchandise stores surveyed reported substantial sales increases in recent years; in one case, sales were up 100% in the last eight years. Expansion of store facilities was necessary in some outlets. The furniture stores likewise reported sales progress, but some had felt the impact on their appliance sales from the Atlanta stores. The apparel and shoe stores reported mixed sales experiences. In some cases, sales had moved steadily up; in other cases, the sales level had shown little progress.

Variety shops reported a steady sales picture, with most showing increases over the previous year. In the hardware lines, mill supply items were reportedly increasing in sales, with particular emphasis on plumbing, heating and air conditioning items. Drug sales were said to have increased substantially during the first of the year, then slowed somewhat. Reports on jewelry sales suggested that a levelling-off had occurred.

Sample comments from individual merchants reveal some of the problems that retailers recognize as being significant:

> Relocate city hall and make the area a parking lot...Local income is not sufficient to maintain large volume of business... must do much sales promotion.
>
> Industrialization of county will raise income, stimulate more sales.
>
> We have to have more parking space...may move off the square if necessary.
>
> Nearby towns pull off too much of potential sales from Carrollton...no reason other than lack of aggressiveness by local merchants.
>
> Carrollton is overrated as a retail town...need more manufacturing to provide more local income.
>
> We do a lot of advertising, mostly in the paper, and it pays off...We have a lot of competition, but we draw customers from a wide area.
>
> We used to have city-wide promotions and they were good...Now we can't get people to cooperate...The Atlanta stores have hurt some of our lines.
>
> We should get some space off the square for parking...We have had steady sales increase...we carry good name brand lines and have good credit business.

We pick up a lot of customers from Bowden and Bremen...our parking facilities have helped and so has our general reputation.

We get charge customers from as far as Heflin and Douglasville... what would really help retail trade here is to have a general cleanup, better looking highways into town, and some more restaurants.

Everything would be better if we could get the stores to cooperate on openings and closings...families need more time to shop together...I'd like night openings if everybody would stay open.

Purchasing Habits and Attitudes of Consumers

Equally important to the total picture of the trade environment is the attitude of the consumer toward the merchandising practices of local retailers. The consumer survey results reported in this section are based on interviews with 118 local residents -- a sampling of approximately 1% of Carrollton's population. Perceptible differences in attitudes and habits were noted in the collection of information from white and Negro citizens; for this reason, the results for each group are stated separately as a means of pointing up those factors of special significance to each group.

Characteristics of the Consumer Survey Sample (Table 5). The distribution of married as opposed to single consumers was almost identical in both white and Negro groups. Interestingly, a greater percentage of both husbands and wives were employed in the white group than in the Negro group, while somewhat more representatives of the Negro group were employed outside Carrollton.

Interest in Atlanta newspapers is reflected in the large number of subscriptions among Negro consumers; relatively minor interest is shown in local newspaper coverage. Among the white group, there is an apparent tendency to take both Atlanta and local newspapers and relatively minor interest in subscriptions only to Atlanta papers.

These findings illustrate the coverage of Atlanta retailers' advertising in Carrollton. Their ads go into the homes of the majority of all consumers. At the same time, very large percentages of both groups are subject to the influence of Atlanta stores through television advertising.

Table 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONSUMER SURVEY SAMPLE

Characteristic	Percent of Total White	Percent of Total Negro
Married	79	80
Single	21	20
Either husband or wife employed	50	80
Both husband and wife employed	41	20
Retired	7	0
Employed in Carrollton	94	80
Employed outside Carrollton	6	20
Newspapers subscribed to:		
Atlanta paper only	19	53
Local paper only	6	16
Atlanta and local paper	68	15
None	7	16
Own television set	93	80

Influence of Atlanta on Carrollton Consumers (Table 6). The most striking finding in regard to the influence of the Atlanta trade area relates to the much greater frequency with which Negro consumers shop in Atlanta. A factor in this frequency is undoubtedly the somewhat different environment involving more integrated facilities. It should not be presumed that all Negro citizens shop in Atlanta an average of 13 times each year. It should be recognized, however, that a significant portion do shop there more frequently than do the whites.

The item most commonly purchased in Atlanta by both groups is clothing. Furniture falls in second place for both groups, while gifts and specialty items follow in third and fourth place for the whites. Purchases of miscellaneous items, food and "everything" by Negro consumers in Atlanta suggests that many purchases are probably made there by individuals employed near or in Atlanta.

Both groups value variety of merchandise as the chief reason for shopping in Atlanta. The availability of price concessions ranks second and customer service third. Customer service is of special significance for the Negro group. Quality of merchandise ranks fourth and is of particular importance to Negro consumers. Credit policies of Atlanta stores do not

Table 6

INFLUENCE OF ATLANTA ON CARROLLTON CONSUMERS

	Percent Mentioning	
Items bought in Atlanta:	White	Negro
Clothes	79	57
Furniture	6	4
Appliances	3	0
Gifts	7	0
Food	0	6
Specialty items	7	0
Miscellaneous	0	10
"Everything"	0	6
No response	0	22
Reasons for buying in Atlanta:		
Credit policies	16	35
Quality of merchandise	31	49
Price levels	44	55
Variety of merchandise	70	63
Customer service policies	27	55
Special needs	15	0
Pleasure of the trip	12	0
Special sales attractions	3	0
	Average	
Number of times shopped in Atlanta each year	5.1	13.3

have particularly strong appeal for white consumers; they do have for Negro consumers. Worth noting is the finding that 12% of the white consumers mentioned the "pleasure of the trip" as one reason for shopping in Atlanta. Apparently many consumers combine shopping trips with other entertainment.

Consumer Evaluations of Carrollton Retailers (Table 7). Most meaningful to white consumers is the friendliness of local retailers, while local credit policies are most appealing to Negro consumers. Customer service policies rank second for both groups. Within the Negro group, there was frequent and reasonable reference to the need for a more consistent pattern of courtesy to members of their race.

Findings as to opinions on specific practices and policies indicate some dissatisfaction in both groups with the variety of merchandise available, the quality of sales training and parking convenience. The majority of white consumers consider customer service excellent to satisfactory; the majority of Negro consumers feel that customer service is marginal to unsatisfactory.

Table 7

CONSUMER EVALUATIONS OF CARROLLTON RETAILERS

Evaluation of:	Excellent		Satisfactory		Marginal		Unsatisfactory	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
Credit policies	39	33	45	41	0	5	0	8
Price levels	17	2	46	31	19	25	0	15
Variety of merchandise	12	0	42	49	26	33	15	18
Quality of sales training	15	2	45	25	22	25	10	33
Customer service	15	0	58	31	15	49	3	18
Attractiveness of displays	13	10	58	31	13	33	6	10
Parking convenience	6	18	26	20	26	31	33	20

Like best about Carrollton retailers:	Percent Mentioning	
	White	Negro
Credit policies	3	33
Quality of merchandise	4	0
Price levels	3	4
Variety of merchandise	2	4
Customer service policies	26	12
Convenience	6	4
Friendliness	45	6
Courtesy	15	0

Both groups rank local credit policies in the excellent to satisfactory range with somewhat less approval of display quality and price levels. It should be noted that the Negro consumer tends to be more critical of local practices -- possibly due to a more conscious comparison with Atlanta stores.

Consumer Opinions on Needed Improvements (Table 8). Those areas mentioned most frequently begin with the need for a broader variety of merchandise and include such items as improvements in customer service and courtesy, better trained salespeople, improved parking facilities, a general improvement in both exterior and interior appearance of stores, and more attractive displays. An interest in better shoe and dress lines was indicated by a number of white consumers.

In terms of the overall attractiveness of the shopping district, approximately one-fourth of both groups considered it good, almost one-half of the white consumers considered the district fair, while 35% of the Negro consumers and 20% of the white consumers considered it unattractive.

Table 8

CONSUMER OPINIONS ON NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

Areas needing improvement:	Percent Mentioning White	Percent Mentioning Negro
Customer service and courtesy	4	9
Better trained salespeople	10	4
Customer comfort	2	10
Parking facilities	18	0
Variety of merchandise	32	0
Appearance of stores	9	0
Ads and displays	8	0
Better shoe and dress lines	7	0
Cleanliness in stores	3	0
Better shopping hours	4	0
Additional restaurants	3	0
Cooperation among merchants	3	0
Evaluation of appearance of shopping districts:		
Good	23	25
Fair	48	18
Bad	20	35
No comment	9	22

Influence of Nearby Towns on Carrollton Consumers (Table 9). Approximately the same percentage of consumers in both groups report that they shop in nearby towns on occasion. Their reasons varied from personal friendship with a specific retailer to a strongly held feeling that other towns had better product lines, better service and nicer restaurants (particularly important to women shoppers). Newnan appears to draw the greatest percentage of white consumers, while Bowdon attracts more Negro customers. LaGrange is reportedly popular because of its dress shops.

Consumer Evaluations of Services in Carrollton (Table 10). White consumers are largely satisfied with local services, while 41% of Negro consumers feel they are inadequate. The general needs are described by both groups as expanded medical and dental services, with better household repair services in second place. Enlarged medical and dental services for Negro citizens is of particular urgency, and some action should be taken by local officials to encourage a solution to this problem.

Table 9

INFLUENCE OF NEARBY TOWNS ON CARROLLTON CONSUMERS

	Percent Mentioning	
Shop in nearby towns:	White	Negro
Yes	28	27
No	72	51
No comment	0	22
Towns visited for shopping:		
Newnan	15	4
Bremen	6	2
LaGrange	9	0
Bowdon	6	6
Villa Rica	2	2
Rome	2	2
Whitesburg	0	4
Temple	0	2
Cedartown	0	1

Table 10

CONSUMER EVALUATIONS OF SERVICES IN CARROLLTON

	Percent Mentioning	
Find local services adequate:	White	Negro
Yes	94	39
No	6	41
No comment	0	22
Additional services needed:		
Medical and dental services	9	41
Household repair	7	8
Legal services	0	2
Improved telephone service	3	0
Auto repair	2	0

THE CARROLLTON TRADING AREA AND ITS POTENTIAL

The Carrollton trading area covers parts of four counties in Georgia and two counties in Alabama. (See Map 1.) The area represents a population of approximately 50,000. The effective buying income of the counties in the trading area assumes sizable proportions, as indicated in Table 11.

Table 11

EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOME IN CARROLLTON TRADING AREA

County	Net Income	Number of Households	Income per Household
Carroll	$ 44,893,000	10,300	$4,359
Haralson	19,368,000	4,200	4,611
Douglas	21,073,000	4,600	4,581
Heard	4,470,000	1,300	3,438
Cleburne (Alabama)	9,715,000	2,900	3,350
Randolph (Alabama)	19,632,000	5,500	3,569
Total	$119,151,000	28,800	$4,137

Source: "Survey of Buying Power," Sales Management.

Substantial portions of Douglas, Randolph and Cleburne counties are outside the trading area proper, but a portion of their citizens are nevertheless drawn into the Carrollton shopping community.

The buying power potential within the area is of basic importance to the development of greater retail trade. Of equal importance is the matter of convincing consumers that they should spend their buying power in the community. Table 12 indicates the trend in per household effective buying income for Carroll County, Carrollton and Georgia. The per household increase for Carrollton has substantially exceeded the gains for the county and the state. The unusual gains in the distribution of individual household incomes in Carrollton has also exceeded that of the county and the state.

The chief point to be drawn from these data is that buying power within the county is still below the state average, but Carrollton residents are developing a very high effective buying income which should be retained as much as possible in local trade.

MAP 1
THE CARROLLTON TRADING AREA

LEGEND:

A – Carrollton
B – Villa Rica
C – Bremen
D – Bowdon
E – Whitesburg
F – Newnan
G – LaGrange
H – Muscadine
I – Heflin
J – Cedartown

one inch: 18 miles

Table 12

EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOME IN CARROLL COUNTY, CARROLLTON AND GEORGIA

	Income Per Household	Distribution of Households by Income				
		0 - $ 2,499	$ 2,500-3,999	$ 4,000-6,999	$ 7,000-9,999	$ 10,000 and over
1957						
Carroll County	$ 3,758	42.1	29.1	22.8	4.2	1.8
Carrollton	3,882	37.4	30.6	24.5	4.9	2.6
Georgia	4,955	33.6	25.3	28.9	7.8	4.4
1958						
Carroll County	4,056	43.3	28.4	22.2	4.3	1.8
Carrollton	3,893	38.7	29.8	23.8	5.0	2.7
Georgia	5,002	34.4	24.9	28.3	8.0	4.4
1959						
Carroll County	4,287	38.8	29.4	23.1	5.6	3.1
Carrollton	4,178	34.7	30.1	24.8	6.3	4.1
Georgia	5,363	30.8	25.3	28.2	8.9	6.8
1960						
Carroll County	4,224	30.7	33.4	26.3	6.5	3.1
Carrollton	4,316	27.3	33.2	27.9	7.3	4.3
Georgia	5,476	23.5	27.5	31.1	10.5	7.4
1961						
Carroll County	4,359	42.8	30.2	15.8	6.0	5.2
Carrollton	5,260	35.8	31.4	16.9	6.6	9.3
Georgia	5,307	38.5	27.4	17.0	7.6	9.5

Source: "Survey of Buying Power," Sales Management.

The future growth of Carroll County and Carrollton will provide new opportunities for trade outlets. While wholesaling -- except in certain specialized categories -- will probably be restricted by Atlanta wholesale activity, the anticipated population increases should stimulate substantial retail gains. Population projections for Carrollton range from 12,300 to 15,500 by 1970. With the completion of planned highway developments, however, it is probable that additional population gains will be achieved if future residents of Atlanta spread to the west as they have followed freeways to the north and south of Atlanta.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A

RETAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Company____________________________________ Line____________________

Address____________________________________ D & B____________________

Person interviewed__________________________

Facilities: Rent ( ) Store size__________ Warehouse size___________

Own ( )

Value of fixtures and equipment______________

Employment:	No.	Average Weekly Wage
Management	__________	__________________
Sales	__________	__________________
Clerical	__________	__________________
Other	__________	__________________

	Good	Fair	Poor
Outside appearance	( )	( )	( )
Inside appearance	( )	( )	( )
Location	( )	( )	( )

Trucks: Number ____________ Own ( ) Lease ( )

Last year's sales volume_____________________

Best season______________________ Worst season_________________

Best lines_______________________ Worst lines__________________

Where made_______________________ Where made___________________

Credit _______________ % of sales Carry own accounts: Yes ( ) No ( )

Cash _________________ % of sales

Type of ownership___________________________ When business started________

Type of customers____

Area from which customers drawn____

Recent sales trends____

Community advantages____

Community disadvantages____

Major problems____

Plans____

Exhibit A (Cont'd)

Interviewer's Evaluation

Assets____

Liabilities____

Management Competence__________________________________

Summary:

Interviewer

Date

Exhibit B

CONSUMER SURVEY

Name________________ Address________________

Occupation of husband____________ Location of employment________

Occupation of wife____________ Location of employment________

Size of family________________

Number members under 12__________ Between 12-20__________

Own house________ Rent house________ Live in apartment______

How long have you lived in Carrollton?____________

What newspaper(s) do you subscribe to?____________

Do you own a television set?________ If so, how many?________

Where do you buy the following goods? (Give names of store, city, and reasons why)

Groceries________________

Lumber, building supplies, hardware____________

Drugs________________

Furniture and appliances____________

Automobiles________________

Clothes________________

How often do you shop in Atlanta?____________

What do you usually buy in Atlanta?____________

Why do you buy these items in Atlanta?

Liberal credit policies__________ Better price__________

Quality of merchandise__________ Better variety of goods________

Better policies on returns and customer service__________

Other reasons (specify)____________

What do you like most about Carrollton retailers?____________

Exhibit B (Cont'd)

How would you classify Carrollton stores in terms of:

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Marginal	Unsatisfactory
Credit policies	______	______	______	______
Competitive prices	______	______	______	______
Variety of merchandise	______	______	______	______
Well trained salespeople	______	______	______	______
Service policies	______	______	______	______
Attractive displays	______	______	______	______
Parking convenience	______	______	______	______

What could be improved about Carrollton retailers?______________________________

____

____

Do you consider the Carrollton shopping districts attractive?____________________

____

Do you shop in any of the nearby small towns?______ If so, which ones?__________

__________________________ What do you buy?_____________________________________

Why?____

Do you find adequate service (medical, dental, legal, household repair, etc.) available in Carrollton?_________ If not, which do you find inadequate?_________

____

____

Interviewer Comments

Interviewed by__________________________ Date________________________________